DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 650 SO 025 516

AUTHOR Romanowski, Michael H.
TITLE Fleeing from Democratic Ideals: The Content of U.S. History Textbooks.
PUB DATE Mar 94
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Chicago, IL, March 19-22, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Content Analysis; Higher Education; Media Research; *Textbook Bias; *Textbook Content; Textbook Evaluation; Textbook Research; Textbooks; *United States History

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the discourse of textbooks leaves various impressions upon students regarding our democratic ideals of justice and equality. A qualitative content analysis of five widely sold secondary U.S. history textbooks was conducted. The content areas analyzed were the Japanese American internment during World War II and related issues dealing with the treatment of minorities. The paper argues that schools must develop critically thinking, socially conscientious students willing and capable of extending democratic ideals of equality and social justice to the economic, political, and social arenas. The study concludes that most secondary U.S. history textbooks not only fail to develop but also hinder the development of critical citizenship by presenting a mystified representation of American history and providing inadequate educational tools for the classroom. Developing strategies to encourage critical reflection by students must be the goal of schools. Contains 16 references. (EH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 389 650

Fleeing From Democratic Ideals: The Content of U. S. History Textbooks.

A Paper Presented at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Annual Meeting

Chicago, Illinois

March, 1994

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michael H. Romanowski

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Michael H. Romanowski
Ohio Northern University
Center for Teacher Education and Certification
Ada, Ohio 45810

SO 025 516

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The process of schooling is entrenched in many assumptions that are treated as natural and accepted as common sense. Among these is an unquestioning faith and reliance in the traditional textbook. This faith regards textbooks as indispensable educational tools used to pass on to students what we as a culture deem "important." They govern the learning process and provide students with culturally significant knowledge. This knowledge is believed to be necessary in order to develop citizens who understand our heritage and have grasped the meaning of our deeply held democratic values.

Although the public regards textbooks as unbiased and accurate, they are not innocent educational tools that simply teach students skills and knowledge. Textbooks attempt to "shape" the minds of students, that is, to induce attitudes and ways of looking at the world. They determine what counts as legitimate knowledge regarding American history. Furthermore, textbooks serve as a system of moral regulation by defining the criteria that determine truth and creating the reference points for what is considered morality. More importantly, U.S. history textbooks define our democratic values.

The problem with textbooks is not that they promote a particular understanding of American history but that they pretend rhetorically not to do this. Textbooks claim "objectivity" and as McLaren (1989) argues, "knowledge acquired in school--or anywhere, for that matter--is never neutral or objective but is ordered and structured in particular ways" (p. 169). The history provided by textbooks is never value-free and nonmoral

but rather creates impressions and images that later become students' explanations, beliefs, and understanding of the world.

This article examines through a qualitative content analysis of secondary U.S. history textbooks how the discourse of textbooks leaves various impressions upon students regarding our democratic ideals of justice and equality. I suggest that the authors put forth little effort in making inequality, injustices, and racism problematic or open to discussion. Rather, textbooks evade issues that center on our democratic values of justice and equality.

The theoretical bases is Habermas's theory of knowledge constitutive interests. Emphasizing the technical interest, I discuss findings that demonstrate that despite textbooks claim to objectivity, there is evidence that this form of objectivity denies ethical values by presenting knowledge in an *instrumental* manner. *In* turn, this *technical* discourse is *ideological* and serves the pragmatic purpose of supporting particular interests by justifying the text's arguments. Finally, I speculate on how teachers can utilize Habermas' emancipatory interest to free students from the imposed meanings of textbooks.

Method

The study used five popular secondary school U.S. history textbooks, determining the top five publishing companies from information supplied by the American Textbook Council and the American Association of Publishers. All five companies selected refused to release information concerning the usage of a particular textbook. However, the marketing departments of each publisher agreed to disclose the title for what was considered their "best-selling" secondary American history textbook.[1] These titles are not based on

the publisher's opinion of the quality of the textbooks, rather each title represents the U.S. history book that sells the most copies. Since the top five publishers provided the information, the books examined can be considered to be very popular U.S. history textbooks and serve as an excellent sample that is representative of the history textbooks used in most American public schools.

The content areas to be analyzed were the Japanese American internment during World War II and related issues dealing with the treatment of minorities. Each individual passage dealing with the internment of the Japanese during World War II served as the starting point of the analysis. Four categories based on Habermas's technical interest served as a framework used to guide the analysis.[2] The particular passage was read, analyzed, and marked in according to each category. Although the *study centers on* the *internment, other relevant issues regarding the* treatment of minorities are examined. These issues were determined by the individual textbook. For example, the following excerpt demonstrates how the various historical events were selected.

> Americans also suffered deep anxieties and fears. However, these fears did not lead to the widespread repressions of minority groups that occurred in World War I. (Todd & Curti 1990, p. 807)

This prompts an analysis of the textbook's treatment of minorities during World War I. These various "moves" continued throughout the study until information became redundant and there were no "new" findings.

Although it would have been equally appropriate to analyze the treatment of slavery or any other historical event that centers on the treatment of minorities and controversy, the internment of the Japanese Americans during World War II was selected partly because of my

experience teaching the event in high school and partly because it has been largely ignored by those who have examined the content of secondary history textbooks. It is also important to realize that my own understanding of the ideals of justice and equality underlies the analysis, the development of the categories, and findings.

Theoretical Framework: Habermas and Knowledge-Constitutive-Interests.

This study invokes the work of German social theorist Jurgen Habermas who makes a distinction among various forms of knowledge. For Habermas (1971), knowledge is never predetermined or simply external, rather it is the result of human activity that is motivated by needs and interests. The manner in which we select, organize, and structure knowledge is based upon various interests, which in turn shapes our perception of the world.

According to Habermas, all knowledge is "historically and socially rooted and interests bound" (Ewert 1991, p. 347). "Even something as basic as the survival of the human species is not a matter of instinct and random behaviors. It is grounded in knowledge and human action" (Grundy 1991, p. 9). A relationship exists between the orientation of humans and knowledge, where even our basic actions are organized and revolve around knowledge and interests.

For Habermas, all knowing has a knowledge-constitutive-interest. This concept is used to explain the relationship that exists between knowledge and human interests. Habermas realizes that there are various fundamental human interests that influence the construction of knowledge. Therefore, we must reject

> the idea that knowledge is produced by some sort of 'pure' intellectual act in which the knowing subject is himself 'disinterested.' Knowledge is never the outcome of a 'mind' that is detached from everyday concerns. On the contrary, it is always constituted on the basis of interests developed out of the natural needs of the human species and that have been shaped by historical and social conditions. (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 134)

Knowledge-constitutive interests shape what we consider as knowledge and govern the construction of categories that organize that knowledge. Cherryholmes (1988) argues that "knowledge does not exist apart from the constitutive interests that lead to its production. There is no clear, distinct line of demarcation between knowledge on one side and ideology, human interests, and power on the other" (p. 84). Simply stated, various interests shape and determine what counts as legitimate forms of knowledge.

Habermas identifies three basic interests. These are the technical, the practical and the emancipatory. Acknowledging all three interests, this study limits discussion to the technical and the emancipatory. These serve as the foundation of the theory utilized in this study and the basis for recommendations.

The technical interest finds its philosophical basis in positivism, which claims that valid knowledge can only be established by reference to that which is experienced by the senses. It is assumed that there is an objective world where knowledge can be neutral and value free (Carr and Kemmis 1986). Positivism assumes "that empirical analytical research can identify law-like regularities in the social world, which can be identified and manipulated as with objects in the physical world" (Giroux 1981, p. 151). This way of knowing sees individual action as not the result of "subjective

reflective consciousness" (Ewert 1991, p. 349) but rather, considers individual action to be understood "as something governed by invariant functional laws that operate beyond the individual actors' personal control" (Carr & Kemmis 1986, p. 59).

The technical interest rests on the idea that the interests of human beings is found in acquiring knowledge that will accommodate their technical control over natural objects. This type of knowledge is labeled instrumental or technical knowledge, and leads to what Habermas calls instrumental rationality. Instrumental rationality refers to the "manipulation and control of the environment: prediction about observable physical or social events, based on empirical knowledge and governed by technical rules; and the criterion of effective control of reality, which determine the appropriateness of action" (Mezirow 1981, p. 4). The end result is the reduction of "moral, aesthetic, educational and political issues to technical problems: why and what are reduced to how" (Bullough & Goldstein 1984, p. 144).

According to Habermas, different human interests require different forms of knowledge which in turn, require different ways of knowing and different forms of rationality. It is important to realize that each rationality is a valid process for knowing within its individual domain of knowledge. However, problems occur when all ways of knowing are subjected to a single form of rationality. In particular, Habermas criticizes the use of instrumental rationality as the criterion for all forms of knowledge. He does not reject the empirical-analytic sciences or instrumental rationality, but he does reject their "universal application as the only valid form of knowledge" (Ewert 1991, p. 350). Limiting knowledge to the technical interest

prevents discussion of ethical issues and presents knowledge as natural and objective.

This criticism can be easily directed toward the knowledge found in secondary U.S. history textbooks where knowledge constructed under instrumental reasoning fails to provide guidance in ethical--political matters. Although textbook knowledge claims to be neutral and objective, the instrumental knowledge serves particular interests and is ideological. Ideology is in this sense described by Young (1990) as

> the taken for granted knowledge and practices which serve the interests of some groups or sections of society but not the interests of all. Ideology gets its power from the fact that this one-sided interest is disguised as either being actually in the interests of all or outside the realm of human control all together--as a fact of nature. The most powerful form which ideology can take is to be taken-for-granted--to be not only natural but unquestioned, even, unarticulated. (p. 28)

Textbooks often utilize instrumental knowledge to limit the discussion of history to that of "objective" facts and concepts. The knowledge serves a pragmatic purpose of defending the textbook's arguments. Embedded in this technical discourse is an ideological framework which denies issues of justice and equality in turn limiting discussion of the appropriateness of governmental and individual action. The knowledge not only serves to support the arguments and interests of some groups but also avoids questioning the ethical issues regarding individual and governmental action. This one-sided interest is disguised under the mask of historical objectivity and is granted the status of truth.

The following discussion addresses several ways in which the instrumental knowledge of textbooks fails to raise issues of justice and

equality, in turn defining these democratic values and serving particular interests.

Stripping U.S. History of Significant Moral Issues

Instrumental rationality assumes objectivity which reduces knowledge to a realm of so-called "objective" facts. This form of objectivity denies that ethical values exist or they are understood as unimportant. It is assumed that questions centering on morals and values can and should be separated from facts or various modes of inquiry. The tendency is to accept the given forms of the human world by centering on questions of what is rather than why or what might be.

This is often the case regarding U.S. history textbooks. The knowledge found in textbooks is isolated from its moral components and historical interpretation becomes a technical task. Emphasis is placed upon objective facts and concepts that are stripped of our democratic ideals of justice and equality. Not only does this knowledge exclude significant moral issues but also provides supports for a particular interpretation of U.S. history. When instrumental thinking is considered to be the criterion for all forms of historical knowledge, students often fail to understand the moral issues and related consequences regarding U.S. history.

As an example, most textbooks trivialize the conditions of the internment camps, downplay the personal property losses suffered by the victims, and fail to raise the many possible motives for the internment. These exclusions deal with the interests of unscrupulous politicians who believed that they would gain support by favoring the camps, selfish economic reasons of farmers and business associations who thought that they would gain by reducing Japanese American competitors, leaders of

racial discrimination, fascistic thinking including racism, scapegoating, and other interests that were served by the internment. Possible reasons for racist policies such as the physical features of the Japanese Americans and their lack of political power are never possibilities in history textbooks. Furthermore, most textbooks fail to discuss "recent" court cases and government actions which made formal apologies and compensated the ancestors of the internment victims. [3]

Eliminated from the discussion are issues such as racism, discrimination, civil rights and ethnocentrism, which are not only the central elements of the Japanese internment but also are crucial in the discussion of the treatment of minorities. This in turn, camouflages our democratic ideals of justice and equality. This stripping of moral issues is evident in the following excerpt:

> There was no evidence that these Americans were disloyal. They were forced to sell their homes and businesses on short notice and at sacrifice prices. They then were confined in camps, watched by guards, and treated as if they were dangerous. Not until after the presidential election of 1944 did the government change its policy and begin to release these innocent citizens. (Boorstein et. al., 1990, p. 677)

Although the textbook acknowledges that the internment was "for no good reason," the Japanese Americans were "innocent citizens," and there was no evidence of disloyalty, the account is simply stated in mere technical terms. Issues of racism, prejudice, and ethnocentrism are divorced from the internment. Moral principles such as "justice" and "equality" are neither raised nor are the words justice and equality used in the textbook account of the relocation. Even though they were "innocent citizens," issues of civil

rights and the government's moral and legal responsibility for the welfare of its citizens is eliminated from the discussion.

The ideological framework that denies the existence of ethical issues is evident in the following excerpt which addresses the role of African Americans in the military during World War II. The text states that

> about 371,000 black Americans served in World War I, but, as in earlier wars, they often met prejudice and discrimination. They were restricted to separate units, recreation centers, and living accommodations. Most of the 200,000 black troops sent to Europe served in noncombatant battalions, though many of them requested combat duty. All of the 10,000 blacks who served in the navy were assigned to non-combat duties. As the war progressed the bravery and courage of black units under fire were plain to see. (Todd and Curti, p. 678)

This example demonstrates how instrumental rationality limits the portrayal of U.S. history to instrumental knowledge that is used to exclude discussion of our democratic ideals. Discrimination and racism are discussed in a "matter of fact" manner and simply treated unproblematically rendering democratic ideals irrelevant. Furthermore, the social, economic, and political conditions that created the situation remain unquestioned.

Limiting Meaning--Precisely Defined Concepts

Based upon objectivity, instrumental rationality considers knowledge to exist outside of the individual and is subjected to the demands of an exact and precise formulation. This is evident in textbooks when U.S. history "is reduced to those concepts and 'facts' that can be operationally defined, that is, they have precise meaning and definitions" (Giroux 1981, p. 151).

Textbooks transform abstract and multifaceted meanings into technical and exact terms. This limits possible meanings and excludes ethical concerns.

As an example in several textbooks, the definition of the concept of loyalty is restricted and reduced to simply military service and performance. For example, Todd and Curti (1990) define loyalty in the following manner:

> Yet there had never been any real proof that these Japanese Americans had been disloyal. Indeed, nearly all of the Nisei remained loyal, patriotic American citizens despite their harsh, unfair treatment. Many of those allowed to serve in the armed forces distinguished themselves for bravery. (p. 808)

This excerpt serves as more than a simple example of loyalty. It defines the criteria used to determine the loyalty for Japanese American citizens. By excluding other examples of Japanese American loyalty and failing to raise additional aspects of what it means to be a loyal U.S. citizen, the text limits meaning and reduces complicated concepts to precise definitions.

This continues when Bragdon, McCutchen and Ritchie (1992) define loyalty in the following manner:

> despite their unhappy experience, most Japanese Americans remained loyal to the United States. More than 8,000 were drafted, and more than 9,000 others volunteered for military service. A Japanese American army unit recruited from detention camps fought in the Italian campaign and was the army's most decorated unit during the war. (p. 884)

For Japanese Americans, loyalty is reduced to military service and performance. This precise meaning not only eliminates many possible aspects of what it means to be loyal but also camouflages issues that center on justice and equality. For example, Japanese Americans were citizens by birth, taxpayers, members of communities, voters, parents,

and children alike. Even though "there had never been any real proof of disloyalty," the Japanese had to prove their loyalty by serving in the military. Other citizens, some of German descent, were not required to substantiate their loyalty. Japanese Americans were denied their basic civil rights.

Excluded from the discussion is the government's denial of basic civil rights and the moral and legal responsibilities for the welfare of its citizens, discussion of racism and discrimination, and other ethical questions centering on justice and equality for all citizens are avoided. Instead of addressing just and equal treatment of citizens, the instrumental definition centers on the usefulness of military service which is then considered the good and the criterion for right conduct--being loyal. This instrumental thinking eliminates any need for ethical choices, since any choice is based on purely technical knowledge rather than on moral values. Emphasis is no longer placed on morality but rather morality is reduced to merely simple defined facts and laws.

When textbooks frame knowledge in a form associated with objectivity, a situation is created where neither students nor teachers ask how the definitions and meanings developed. The pedagogical danger of this objective "framing of educational knowledge is that it will undermine, rather than enhance, the student reader's capacity to criticize; that once in the classroom, textual authority will become textual authoritarianism precluding criticism" (Luke, De Castell & Luke 1989, p. 247). Limiting meaning with precisely define terms encourages students to accept textbook knowledge rather than criticize the imposed meanings of textbooks. Consequently, history textbooks must begin to draw attention to the complexity of terms such as loyalty. For example, the textbook *American Voices* (Berkin et al.

1992) moves beyond this instrumental definition and begins to question the issue of the Japanese Americans having to prove their loyalty by presenting differing perspectives. The text states that

> In 1976 President Gerald Ford proclaimed: We now know what we should have known then---not only was the evacuation wrong but Japanese Americans were and are loyal Americans. On the battlefield and at home the names of Japanese Americans have been and continue to be written in American history for the sacrifices and contributions they have made to the well-being and the security of this, our common nation. (p. 656)

The text continues by raising the issue of civil rights and introducing the voice of Arthur Morimitsu, a victim of the internment.

> In 1988, Japanese Americans received a formal apology from the United States government for the harm it had caused in violating their civil rights during World War II. Congress also voted to compensate the survivors in the amount of $20,000 each. Arthur Morimitsu expressed the views of many survivors: Frankly, a lot of us [internees] were not looking for monetary [payments]. We wanted recognition that we were loyal, that interning loyal American citizens was wrong. (p. 656)

This view presents a "complex" definition of loyalty and draws attention to the social construction and context dependence of meanings. The introduction of differing perspectives begins to raise issues centering on "right" and "wrong," justice, and equality. [4] This creates a space for students to situate U.S. history with respect to questions of social justice and human freedom.

The Ends Justify the Means

McLaren (1989) describes instrumental rationality as "a way of looking at the world in which 'ends' are subordinated to questions of 'means' and in which 'facts' are separated from questions of 'values' (186). Historical events are treated as simply technical matters where emphasis is place upon already decided ends rather than the means. Ends are affirmed in lieu of being explained as a social reality. This renders ethical issues as insignificant and discussion is limited to what is--never acknowledging the factors behind the facts.

Carlson (1989) points out that textbooks depoliticize issues through the use of a "narrowly instrumental, means-ends way of thinking. That is, issues tend to be treated merely as technical matters, and the only debate normally recognized is over the *most effective means of achieving" a desired* goal (p. 47). This is especially true regarding the treatment of African Americans and economic advancement. For example, Bragdon, McCuthen, and Ritchie (1992) argue that "although discrimination against workers led to race riots in 26 northern cities in 1917, African Americans in the north made significant economic gains during the war" (p. 747). Emphasis is placed upon the "end results" where African Americans tolerate violence and racism in exchange for economic gains. This deflects attention from our democratic ideals and legitimizes discrimination and violence in the name of economic gain. Issues related to justice and equality appear to be unimportant or secondary since blacks were rewarded with economic gain.

In addition, Jordan, Greenblatt, and Bowes (1988) describe the plight of African Americans in a similar manner when they argue that "despite the violence, however, the economic standing of blacks improved considerably

during the war (p. 661). These descriptions create an impression that economic advancement outweighs justice and equality. Economic growth is portrayed as the ultimate goal and well worth the suffering blacks endured. In a sense, economic gain is justice. In this case, the ends (economic gain) are affirmed and the means (violence and discrimination) are left unquestioned or justified.

When emphasis is placed on the ends, the authors promote a particular understanding of our democratic values. By denying that these values are relevant to the economic status of African Americans, justice is defined as compensation (economic gain) and equality is discussed in economic terms. Economic advancement and gain are placed above justice and equality. Justice is reduced to receiving economic advancement--no matter how attained.

Beyond Our Control--"Natural Social Laws"

Regarding instrumental rationality, Habermas argues against its law-like relationships. He makes a distinction between two types of cause and effect relationships. First, there is an invariant cause and effect relationship that will always in all situations hold true. For example, this relationship can be found in the physical sciences concerning the law of gravity. When an object is dropped to the ground, the outcome will always be the same, no matter where or what conditions exist. Individual consciousness plays no role in the physical law of gravity.

However, invariant cause and effect relationships cannot be applied to human behavior because they rarely occur in social contexts where conscious human thinking subjects act. Cause and effect relationships located in the social world exist because of social relations, factors, and

conditions that are changeable. Although "human actions are constrained by physical, social, and subjective factors, they are not invariantly determined" (Ewert 1991, p. 350).

Concerning cause and effect relationships, instrumental thinking assumes that individual actions are governed and determined by what can be termed "natural social laws." These are technical explanations of human behavior where certain natural social laws deterministically govern human action and are used to justify selected human behavior. This approach to knowledge creates "new forms of mystification which make the social world seem mechanistic and predeterministic (Giroux 1981, p. 54). Human behavior is situated beyond the social realities and relationships of people rendering human action beyond the individual's control.

U.S. history textbooks are often written in this deterministic manner. Human action is portrayed as being caused and controlled by these "natural social laws," consisting of natural consequences that determine appropriate human response and behavior. As an example in several textbooks, the internment is described in terms of a natural social law. Todd and Curti (1990) describe the internment in the following manner:

> Americans also suffered deep anxieties and fears. However, these fears did not lead to the widespread repressions of minority groups that occurred in World War I. The tragic exception to this overall tolerance was the forced relocation of some 100,00 Americans of Japanese birth or parentage. (p. 808)

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, many American were genuinely fearful of a Japanese attack on the United States. This fear was soon turned-against the Nisei-native-born Americans whose ancestors came from Japan. The text portrays Americans as having a natural fear of

the Japanese.[5] Since the Japanese are naturally aggressive, they were a threat to the security of the nation. American fear of the Japanese, which is often the justification for the internment, is articulated as a natural social law governing the actions and consequences of individuals. Americans struggle with their anxieties and fears and overcame "major" oppression of minority groups similar to that of World War I. Soon this fear overcomes Americans, and it is turned against the Nisei. Fear is assumed to be "out there," and its natural outcomes are discrimination, hate, scapegoating and internment camps.

We must realize that the relationship between fear and the internment exists because of social relations, factors, and conditions that are changeable. The failure of textbooks in presenting and discussing other reasons for the internment encourages the acceptance of this invariant cause and effect relationship, possibly justifying the internment based upon fear and military necessity. This depoliticizes and separates the knowledge from other related moral and ethical issues, making it difficult for students to recognize and raise issues of justice and equality. More importantly, whose interests are being served by these representations of U.S. history?

In addition, natural social laws are evident when the issue of segregation is addressed in a section titled "Banning Discrimination." Jordan, Greenblatt, and Bowes (1992) describe discrimination as follows:

> Opening up industrial employment to blacks and other minorities had several effects. The movement of black families from the South into northern and western cities continued the change in the nation's racial map that had started during World War I. It also led to a series of lynchings and race riots. The worst outbreak took place in Detroit in June 1942. Twenty-five blacks and nine whites were killed, and

countless others were injured. Despite the violence, however, the economic standing of blacks improved considerably during the war. (p. 661)

This cause and effect relationship isolates the movement of blacks into white cities as the cause of violence and killings instead of addressing the underlying causes of the violence, lynchings, and race riots--racism and discrimination.

Again we see human action articulated as a natural social law that reduces behavior to simplistic terms. This discussion of racial violence is limited to the movement of African Americans into "white" northern cities and the effects of this movement which is violence. The failure to link discrimination and racism to the violence in northern cities reinforces the dominance of instrumental knowledge as the only way of knowing. Natural social laws and a lack of discussion centering on significant moral issues is the end result.

The portrayal of human action as invariant cause and effect relationships is evident in the various textbooks examined. Natural social laws continue to dominate the various portrayals of women, African Americans, and Japanese Americans. Most textbooks fail to link sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, and discrimination which are the underlying causes of the segregation of these groups during their military service. Furthermore, textbooks seldom raise the causes of segregation or question the institutionalized racism during World War II. These policies are discussed unproblematically and treated as "natural" behavior.

Emancipatory Knowledge and U.S. History Textbooks: Possible Responses

These findings demonstrate that the discourse of secondary American history textbooks encourages readers to accept a particular understanding of the world. The instrumental knowledge found in history textbooks is ideological and promotes an ethical position, one which eliminates any discussion of the ethical choices. Therefore, teachers and students must move beyond the mere technical treatment of historical events and take up the emancipatory interest of knowledge that emphasizes critical reflection of both the self and the institutions and ideologies that distort our understanding of history.

The emancipatory interest is found in "our interest in self-knowledge through self-reflection, which leads to knowledge of how our past influences our current state (Mezirow 1981, p. 5). This fosters a historical perspective which refers to an awareness that "the way things are is not the way they have always been or must necessarily be in the future" (Giroux 1993, p. 28). Emancipatory knowledge centers on critical self-reflection and the individual's "capacity to achieve freedom from self-imposed constraints, reified social forces and institutions, and conditions of distorted communication" (Roderick 1986, p. 56). Since the technical interest will not facilitate autonomy because of its emphasis on control, the emancipatory interest must take the forefront by encouraging the reader to engage in a critical reflection rather than accepting the way things are.

Critical reflection should be understood as "the systematic exploration by the knowing and acting subject of his or her formation as a person and/or of the social history within which that formation has taken place" (Young 1990, p. 34). This is accomplished by self-reflection which ideally reveals distorted self-knowledge and institutional domination. This requires a

process where individuals develop a theory about themselves, society, and ideology. Young (1990) points out that there are two types of reflection. First there is a "reflection on and reconstruction of the general or universal features of human nature and the possibility of knowledge" (p. 37). This type of reflection centers on the subjective conditions that make knowledge possible. The second type of reflection "refers to Marxian idea of critique of ideology which involves reflection capable of freeing the subject from hidden constraints in the structure of social action and speech" (Roderick 1986, p. 63).

Regarding critical reflection and its relationship to history textbooks, students must engage in a self-reflection process that exposes how their identity and world view are shaped and constructed by knowledge. They must analyze their own lives in order to develop an understanding of injustices in society and to develop constructive responses. This requires students to position themselves so they can question their our own racist beliefs and their acceptance of economic, social, and political inequalities that have created these conditions.

The importance of students becoming conscious of their own world view and beliefs takes on an added significance when coupled with ethical frameworks based on democratic ideals. This demands the development of a language of social criticism, one that raises questions centering on oppression and injustices and utilizes ethical frameworks that can be applied to both historical and contemporary issues. .

In addition, critical reflection requires that students grasp the meaning of "objectivity" and comprehend what a point of view and a theory are. They must comprehend the idea that the textbook's interpretation of an event is not value-free but only one of the many possible perspectives.

This requires students to learn the meaning of a "frame of reference" and be capable of uncovering the various perspectives that play a major role in deciding, selecting, and organizing the information that makes up their American history textbooks.

Second, students must be capable of penetrating the "ideological sub-texts embedded in their history textbooks, and also the contradictions within these ideologies" (Carlson 1989, p. 53). In this case, ideology is viewed as a "set of assumptions of which we are barely conscious but which nonetheless directs our efforts to give shape and coherence to the world" (Postman, p. 123). This taken-for-granted knowledge and the interests it serves goes unquestioned, and it is only in the creation of classrooms where students can come to grips with the issues created by the destruction of textbooks meaning that they can begin to understand the reason why of things and the way the world works. As Giroux (1993, p. 120) argues "at issue here is the need to develop pedagogical practices that do more than read off ideologies as they are produced within particular texts." Until students are conscious of the ideologies embedded within the text, they are passive victims of the meanings imposed by textbooks.

Accordingly, teachers must draw attention to the knowledge constructed by history textbooks. No longer can we assume that textbooks are either innocent instructional tools or can teachers assume that the knowledge that creeps into their textbooks is objective and neutral. Rather, teachers must critically respond to the meanings and knowledge presented in textbooks. Cherryholmes (1985) points out that

> the way teachers respond to textbooks is a decisive moment in teaching, a pivotal point in dealing with meaning and meanings. . . Teachers continually choose whether to reinforce knowledge claims presented as

> authoritative and structured or to expose their partiality. . . The structural thrust of textbooks proposes local organizations of knowledge to be global, thereby smuggling ideological biases into the constitution of subjectivities, the way we view ourselves and our place in the world. If teaching reinforces these biases, the social construction of meaning remains hidden, they are treated as 'natural,' and they are reified. (p. 72)

Teachers and students must develop a "critical eye" when reading and using their textbooks. This means that we must provide students with the analytical tools that make them capable of challenging those representations that produce racism, sexism, injustices, inequalities and the conditions and structures that allow their existence. This encourages students to uncover and locate the world views and ideologies present, recognize the moral position embedded in the text, and gain awareness as to how knowledge shapes their own values and understandings of the world. They must move beyond a simplistic historical analysis that emphasizes the technical or concrete events and begin to understand the larger social forces at work.

I suggest as a prerequisite that teachers and students assess and critique the meanings and biases embedded in their own world view and belief system. This is vital, since the biases in textbooks often parallel the biases and prejudices of teachers and students (Shaver 1967). "Educators need to understand and develop in their pedagogies how identities are produced differently, how they take up narratives of the past through the stories and experiences of the present" (Giroux 1993, p. 118).

However, these reflections must not be simply romanticized and celebrated as difference. We must uncover the moral, ethical, and ideological frameworks that structure our understandings of particular situations. Critical reflection must be treated problematically and viewed

within an ethical framework of social justice. This will sensitize students to the many contradictions that exist within their own thinking but more importantly the contradictions found within our democratic ideals that often result in equality and justice for the select few and oppression and discrimination for others.

Finally, the old saying goes that "nothing is inevitable except death and taxes." There are many educators that would add textbooks to that list. Regardless of the improvements in technology, textbooks still determine the version of U.S. history that students have the opportunity to learn. Therefore, teachers must demand better quality textbooks that center on making ethical choices and raising issues regarding our democratic ideals. I recommend that textbooks similar to *American Voices* be utilized in secondary U.S. history classes.

Scott Foresman and Company wanted to provide a multicultural emphasis that moved beyond simple "mentioning" but rather served as the guiding framework of the development of the textbook. They were concerned that the text provide a plurality of views and that the "ordinary American" was represented. [6] The text's emphasis upon the social aspects of American history rather than the traditional emphasis upon American political and military history, enables the authors to begin raising ethical issues that center upon questions of social justice, human freedom, and equality. The underlying feature of the textbook is its emphasis on American voices rather than a single American voice (which is the case with most textbooks). This text provides students with multiple voices, raises morally significant issues, enhances critical reading and thinking skills, and attempts to spark interest and relevancy in students by centering on American social history.

In closing, for a democracy to survive and flourish, schools must develop critically thinking, socially conscientious students willing and capable of extending our democratic ideals of equality and social justice to the economic, political, and social arenas. This requires that citizens own the analytical tools needed to interrogate the ethical aspects of knowledge that appear to be an objective and universal portrayal of reality. My findings suggest that most secondary U.S. history textbooks not only fail to develop but also hinder the development of critical citizenship by presenting a mystified representation of American history. Therefore, they should be viewed as inadequate educational tools.

In spite of the reliance upon textbooks and standardized testing, schools must emphasis critical citizenship and democracy. This begins by moving beyond the instrumental knowledge of textbooks and developing strategies that encourage *critical reflection. The goal of this type of* education is not to "attack the life-world of students-to 'make trouble'. Rather, it should be to assist students to make an effective job of reconstructing the already problematic parts of their life-world through communicative, problem-solving learning" (Young 1990, p. 71). This type of education offers students the opportunity to not only identify, challenge, and rewrite their own histories but to rethink and demystify the particular U.S. history endorsed by textbooks.

Can students break into our democratic ideals by studying textbooks that deny the existence of justice and equality or by memorizing historical events portray injustices? It is time to move beyond equating good students and citizens with high test scores and begin to emphasize the more serious and profound matters that produce inequalities in our culture.

[1] The U.S. history textbooks surveyed included: Berkin, Carol, Alan Brinkley, Clayborne Carson, Robert W. Cherny, Robert A. Divine, Eric Foner, Jeffery B. Morris, Arthur Wheeler, and Leonard Wood. *American Voices.* Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman and Company, 1992; Boorstin, Daniel J., and Brooks M. Kelley. *A History of the United States Since 1861.* Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1990; Bragdon, Henry W., Samuel P. McCutchen, and Donald A. Ritchie. *History of a Free Nation.* Westerville, Ohio: Glencoe Division: Macmillian/McGraw-Hill School Publishing, 1992; Jordan, Winthrop D., Miriam Greenblatt, and John S. Bowes. *The Americans.* Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littel and Company, 1988; Todd, Lewis P., and Merle Curti. *Triumph of the American Nation.* Orlando, Florida: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, Inc., 1990.

[2] The categories used in the analysis and related findings are discussed in detail later in the article. The categories are as follows: Stripping U.S. History of Moral Issues; Means to End Reasoning; Precise Definitions; and Natural Social Laws.

[3] For example, President Reagan's signing of public law 100-383 on 8/1/88 which made apologies and restitution of $1.25 billion to individual Japanese ancestry who were interned during the war is excluded.

[4] Out of the five textbooks examined, *American Voices* begins to move beyond instrumental thinking by raising issues of justice and equality. I would recommend the use of this textbook and discuss specific details later in the article.

[5] It is important to note that prior to the internment, all five textbooks examined described the Japanese people and culture from a military perspective that assumes they are aggressive.

militaristic, and kamikazes. The language portrays the Japanese in a deterministic manner, i.e. all Japanese are aggressive. This perspective is reinforced by most textbooks when they fail to discuss the difference between Japanese militarist and the civilian population. In addition, excluding other vital elements of Japanese culture aids in reinforcing the aggressive image. I believe that this impression of the Japanese might possibly reinforce stereotypical images held by readers. This might later affect students' views of the internment and help encourage their acceptance of natural social laws.

[6] Information regarding the uniqueness of the textbook and Publishing Company's intentions and purposes for producing a book like *American Voices* was supplied by the executive editor.

References

Bullough, R. V., & Goldstein, S. L. (1984). Technical curriculum form and American elementary-school art education. Journal of Curriculum Studies 16(2), 143-154.

Carlson, D. (1989). Legitimation and delegitimation: American history textbooks and the cold war. In Language authority and criticism: Readings on the school textbook., edited by S. De Castell, A. Luke, and C. Luke, 46-55. Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). Becoming critical: Education, knowledge, and action research . Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Cherryholmes, C. H. (1985). Power and criticism: Poststructural investigations in education New York: Teachers College Press.

Ewert, G., D. (1991). Habermas and education: A comprehensive overview of the influence of Habermas in educational literature. Review of Educational Research, 61(3), 345-378.

Giroux, H. A. (1993). Living dangerously: Multiculturalism and the politics of difference. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Giroux, H. A. (1981). Ideology, culture, and the process of schooling . Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Grundy, S. (1987). Curriculum: Product or praxis. Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Habermas, J. (1971). Knowledge and human interests. Boston, Beacon.

Luke, C., De Castell, S., and Luke, A. (1989). Beyond Criticism: The Authority of the School Textbooks. In S. De Castell, A. Luke, and C. Luke (eds.), Language authority and criticism: Readings on the school textbook. (pp. 245-260). Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

McLaren, P. 1989. Life in schools New York & London: Longman Inc.

Mezirow, J. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. Adult Education, 32(1), 3-24.

Postman, N. (1992). Technopoly. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

Roderick, R. (1986). Habermas and the foundations of critical theory New York: St. Martin's.

Shaver, J. P. (1967). Diversity, violence, and religion: Textbooks in a pluralistic society. The School Review, 75(3), 311-327.

Young, R. E. (1990). A critical theory of education: Habermas and our children's future. New York: Teacher's College Press.